

**Access and Equity Committee**  
**School of Education**  
**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**  
[http://www.uncg.edu/soe/access\\_and\\_equity/](http://www.uncg.edu/soe/access_and_equity/)

*Advocating for access, equity and diversity in the life of the School of Education  
and the larger community.*

**Living Diversity in the UNCG School of Education**  
**2007-2008 Profile**

The School of Education values diversity and strives to be a welcoming, supportive, and pluralistic environment in which all students, staff, and faculty thrive. For both our faculty and student body, 16% of individuals are from non-white backgrounds. Our commitment to and appreciation of diversity is reflected in our coursework, our community outreach efforts, our work with local school systems, and our research. This commitment is also reflected in the establishment of the Access and Equity Committee, which serves as a vehicle for faculty, staff, and students to advocate for diversity in the life of the School of Education.

A representative sample of activities (these are not inclusive) related to the goals of this committee, across the School of Education, during 2007-2008, is provided below:

- Mission Statements
  - Several departments address diversity and cultural issues and/or social justice/advocacy specifically in their mission statements. (See departmental websites)
  
- Curriculum
  - CED 605 Counseling Diverse Populations. Master's students are required to take this course during the first semester of their program. Diversity issues are infused throughout the curriculum.
  - CED 688 Spirituality in Counseling addresses diversity in religious and spiritual beliefs of clients.
  - CUI 545 Diverse Learners. Graduate students and lateral entry teachers take this course.
  - CUI 711 Cultural Perspectives on Teaching and Learning.
  - CUI offers a doctoral cognate in equity: CUI 646 Introduction to Equity Education, CUI 711 Cultural Perspectives on Teaching and Learning, CUI 745 Higher Education: Equity, Inclusion, and Learning, and CUI 765 Research in Equity Education.
  - ELC courses involve an emphasis on equity, social justice, inclusion, and diversity, such as Culturally Responsive Leadership, Power and Politics in Schools, Queer Theory, Feminist Theories in Education, Racial Change and Immigration in U.S. Schools.
  - ERM 733 Language Assessment and Testing and ERM 736 Advanced Studies in Second Language Testing. The department is

unique nationwide in terms of the inclusion of assessment course for diverse language groups.

- LIS 688 Multicultural Materials for Children.
- SES 200 People with Disabilities in American Society is offered to undergraduates students from any major as a marker course for social science, general education credit. It is intended to inform and sensitize students regarding the misunderstandings, stereotypes, and discrimination that have been associated with disabilities in our culture, and to create an awareness of the ‘wholeness’ of people regardless of the differences that historically have been thought of as “handicaps.”
  
- Research and Scholarly Activities
  - A substantial number of doctoral dissertations in several departments involve issues related to diversity (CED, CUI, ELC, SES). In ELC, the majority of dissertations are linked to an explicit focus on educational equity, community activism, social and cultural change, and/or social justice.
  - ELC faculty members’ scholarly agendas include peace education, democratic educational reform, African American principal recruitment and retention, demographic change and culturally responsive leadership, black masculinity and population culture, and social justice pedagogies.
  - CUI faculty members are engaged in research projects such as community-based learning in teacher education; making mathematics more accessible to girls and other equity issues related to adolescent girls; equity/access in science education; factors that influence career choices of high achieving young women; deconstructing White privilege in preservice/in-service teacher education; and the connection of micro practice and macro social, economic, and political structures in understanding higher education.
  - CED faculty members are involved in research projects with faculty from several international universities, and the department regularly hosts post-doctoral fellows from other countries.
  
- Funded Research Projects
  - CUI faculty members recently received a TESOL for ALL grant (\$1.4 million, 5-years) to revise their curriculum and offer inservice teacher professional development to enhance preparation for working with the growing population of ELLs in NC schools. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of teachers who are highly qualified to teach ELLs.
  - CED faculty members have funded projects that address health disparities, including preventing diabetes in African Americans and promoting physical and mental health of Latino/a students in rural schools. Two funded domestic violence prevention programs are focused on same-sex couples and Eastside Park.

- A number of SERVE Center's funded projects address diversity populations and access and equity, including two large-scale experimental studies focusing on English language learners and economically disadvantaged African American children, and a research report on social-psychological interventions to raise African American male student achievement.
- SES has received funding to recruit students to be trained in deaf interpreting and for recruiting students from minority groups to become special education teachers.
- Global Activities
  - ERM has established an exchange program with the University of Twente in the Netherlands.
  - CUI hosted several teacher education scholars from China during 2007-2008.
  - CED hosted two post-doctoral fellows from Turkey during 2007-2008.
  - An SES faculty member conducts research on early childhood and special education in Guatemala, Mexico, and other countries.
- Faculty, Staff, and Students
  - Most departments have increased enrollments of students-of-color as well as international students, particularly at the graduate level. Most have specific recruitment strategies to continue this trend.
  - LIS provides support for the Jackson Library Post-MLS Diversity initiative to recruit under-represented librarians for the University Libraries.
  - Over 50% of ERM students are women.
  - ELC's faculty members are diverse along racial, cultural, linguistic, gender, and sexual orientation/affectional dimensions.
  - SERVE Center includes language focused on knowledge, skills, and experience around diversity in all position announcements. Recent hires include an African American woman and a self-identified ELL Italian American woman. An internal diversity committee has been formed at SERVE Center.
- Professional Service Activities
  - A CED faculty member serves on the National Board for Certified Counselors Board of Directors, which is heavily involved in several counseling-related global projects through its NGO partnership with UNESCO. Two doctoral graduates, permanent staff members, and one doctoral student each year work with NBCC International.
  - ERM and SES departmental representatives (students) to the Graduate Students Association are African American women.
  - An Asian American faculty member in LIS serves on the steering committee for a multi-institutional grant to increase diversity in information technology professions.

- SOE representatives to the UNCG Faculty Senate include an ERM woman of Middle Eastern background and an African American man.
- An LIS faculty member serves on the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Round Table of the American Library Association and the Stonewall Book Award Committee.
- Civic Engagement
  - A CED faculty member serves on the Greensboro Human Relations Council.
  - In CUI, K-12 Teaching Fellows are involved in community-based learning, becoming familiar with their learners' home/community environments as well as their school settings, and discovering the strengths within those environments.
  - A number of CUI teacher education students complete internships in Title I/highly impacted schools.
  - CED interns (in schools, community agencies, colleges and universities, etc.) address policies and procedures that hinder equal access to counseling services.
- Internal Support
  - SES secures interpreters at all SES and SOE meetings and events for a SES faculty member who is deaf.
  - Several departments have regular social and professional development events designed to promote a supportive community among faculty and students.
  - ERM hosts international student gatherings where students share information about life and culture in their home countries.
  - CED has a bulletin board in a central room that celebrates the geographic diversity of its students.
  - Faculty members', staff members', and students' lives outside of UNCG are celebrated in various ways (e.g., baby showers). In addition, support in difficult circumstances is provided.
  - Several departments make efforts to be family-friendly, including creative accommodations under the UNCG family leave policy.
  - Creation of AEC itself, as well as support for the Committee and its work from administrators, faculty, and staff. Several administrators (e.g., SOE Dean, Provost) provided financial support for the Committee's activities.

4/30/08

## Conference Statement

The following statement was created by Dr. Camille Wilson Cooper, a member of the Access and Equity Committee, to provide a context for the Committee's inaugural conference on February 9, 2008, at UNCG.

### *The Evolving Meaning of Diversity: Access, Equity, and Activism in the New Century*

In February of 1960, Greensboro, North Carolina shifted from a small southern, U.S. town that few outside the region knew to a town that received international attention due to political activism and unrest. It was during this time that four, African American college students organized sit-in protests as a peaceful initiative to counter the racial hostility, segregation and violence that was affecting the city and much of the nation. These students' actions served as a catalyst for the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and they helped bring about more socially just policies and practices.

Almost half a century later, Greensboro, NC has emerged as a fast growing, culturally diverse city that offers a range of educational, cultural, and recreational resources to its citizens. Many parts of the city are peaceful, integrated, progressive, and thriving, and the city's five colleges and universities are a source of pride. Nevertheless, significant challenges regarding access and equity remain. These are evident in the city's educational, civic, business and political institutions.

Whether it be charges of police corruption and racial bias, the operation of two of the state's lowest performing schools that mainly serve students of color, increasing rates of violent crime in poor neighborhoods, hostile racial conflicts on school and university campuses, or the low level of culturally diverse leadership found within some university systems, there are many reminders that continued progress is needed. In addition, the fact that Greensboro, and the Piedmont region in which is located, is experiencing rapid demographic shifts necessitates building a stronger community that is culturally responsiveness and embracing of diversity in all its nuances.

While Greensboro, at times, has been a site of inequity, it has also been a site of resistance and hope. Some sectors of the local community have always come together to keep moving the city forward. This tradition lives on, and it is partly reflected by the current Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project and the recent election of the city's first African American mayor.

It is essential that higher education assume an active and visible role in bringing about social progress as well. *Of the five colleges and universities in Greensboro, two are public institutions. These are The University of North Carolina at Greensboro – a predominately White institution founded in 1861 as a women's college that is now coeducational and racially integrated – and The North Carolina Agricultural & Technical University (NC A&T), a historically black institution founded in 1890. The universities are located just a few miles down the street from each other, with downtown Greensboro*

(the site of the 1960 sit-ins) in the center. Though UNCG and NC A&T are close together, they have been perceived as worlds apart due to sociopolitical dynamics and some distinctions in their student bodies and mission. Both universities have greatly contributed to the city and region, yet NC A&T is more recognized for promoting racial and cultural advancements. UNCG is working hard to make strides in this area.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro's motto is "Inspire. Change." This signals the potential and ability of faculty members, students, and staff to work for the betterment of our community, region, and our world. The School of Education's Access & Equity Committee (AEC) at UNCG also believes the academic community is well positioned to take action. Indeed, AEC was established in the fall of 2007 to contribute to positive change within and outside of the University.

AEC's mission is to enhance the School of Education's ability to be a welcoming, supportive and pluralistic environment in which all students, staff and faculty members thrive. AEC specifically strives to foster an inclusive climate that affirms the diversity of students, staff and faculty members; educate the SOE community about critical issues pertaining to access, equity and diversity; advocate for diversity in the life of the School of Education; and recognize outstanding work related to access, equity and diversity in research, teaching and/or service to the School of Education and/or the larger community. Committee members consist of faculty members and student and staff representatives.

On February 9, 2008, AEC will hold its inaugural conference on *The Evolving Meaning of Diversity: Access, Equity, and Activism in the New Century*. The conference will bring prominent international, national and local figures who have dedicated their careers to promoting access and equity in political, social, faith-based and academic arenas to discuss diversity and share important ideas about social progress. Poetry, music and film will also be infused in the event. The conference will embody AEC's mission and inform university and local community members that the Committee is here as a resource.

The AEC embraces a broad concept of diversity to include those from all racial, cultural, linguistic, religious, international, and socioeconomic backgrounds, family structures, sexual/relational or affectional orientations, those from the deaf culture, and others with exceptional needs. AEC members, however, realize that *diversity* is a complex (and sometimes contested) notion that means different things to different people. Various understandings of diversity influence individuals' ideologies, as well as communities and institutions.

Offering an opportunity for academics, activists, and other community members to unite and explore the meanings of diversity, while considering implications for providing access and equity, is an important first step of AEC's work. It is AEC's hope that *The Evolving Meaning of Diversity* conference will promote dialogue, inspire progress, and ignite positive change for all.